Psalm 34:1-10

- **READ Psalm 34 1-10**

- **This morning, we have** a wonderful invitation **in the first 10 verses of Psalm 34.**

- The word of God is full of all different kinds of invitations!

- Over and over again, in a wide range of Scripture books and various texts, the inspired **writers offer a variety of invitations**. **This applies to old and new testaments**!

- For **example, God**, through the prophet Isaiah, we are invited to consider the necessity of the forgiveness of sins. Necessity of having our sins washed away. Isaiah 1:

"**Come now, let us reason together, says the LORD: though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall become like wool.**"

Isaiah also writes:

"**Incline your ear, and come to me; hear, that your soul may live; and I will make with you an everlasting covenant, my steadfast, sure love for David**."

- In the New Testament, we read our Lord's gracious words in Matthew 11: "**Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest**."

- Then, our Savior's closing words in the Revelation to John:

"**The Spirit and the Bride say come and let the one who hears say come and let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who desires take the water of life without price**." Rev 22:17

- These **invitations speak loudly of God's abundant grace and mercy** throughout His Word, **inviting sinners to be reconciled with Him and to know peace through the Savior**.
- This morning, I'd **like us to meditate on a slightly different kind of invitation**, **though still** a wonderful and gracious one. It **comes to us from the Psalmist in Psalm 34**.

- **He invites the Lord's people to offer Praise** to **their God. An invitation to magnify or to enlarge God in our hearts and the hearts of others! The author's invite is to exalt the God of His salvation! To rejoice in the God of His salvation. To express heartfelt and sincere thankfulness for what the Lord has done!**

- **AND Why do so? Because it is the right thing to do! Even more so, we were created by God to do so! IT IS PART OF THE CHIEF END OF MAN!**

- Psalm 33:1: "**Sing joyfully to the LORD, you righteous; it is <u>fitting</u> for the upright to praise him**."

- Psalm 147:1: "**Praise the LORD! It is good to sing praises to our God, for it is pleasant, and a song of praise is <u>fitting</u>**.

- The **Psalmist's praise of God is founded upon who God is and what God has done in his life! It is not a flippant and unthoughtful "Praise the Lord." No, it is founded upon the character of God Himself**!

- **So, by God's grace, our goal this morning is to read the first part of Psalm 34 and, with God's blessing, use it** to encourage our **efforts to thank and praise God.**

- **I believe that is, <u>at least in part,</u> the message of the first half of Psalm 34**!

- The whole Psalm is **generally divided into two main divisions. They are verses 1-10 and Verses 11-22 (wisdom literature style like Proverbs and Ecclesiastes).**

- **We can divide the first 10 verses into three sections, as** you have it on the back side of your bulletin.

1) **Verse 1 – 3** is the **author's invitation**: **Come worship with me, and** let us look to our LORD together!
2) **Verses 4 – 7** are the author's testimony, saying **learn from my experience**.
3) **Verses 8 – 10 are words of encouragement to press on**. **That is** an **encouragement to continue walking with and seeking after the LORD**.

- <u>So quite simple this morning:</u> **<u>Invitation, Testimony, Encouragement</u>**

Invitation

- **Starting with the author's invitation**. **READ AGAIN 34: -1-3**

- **When you receive an** invitation, **there are obvious things you need to know**: **Who is it from? When does the event happen? And, of course, where** does **it take place?**

- I **think we take a similar approac**h to understanding these first three verses.

WHO WHEN WHERE

- **Starting with <u>who the invitation is from</u>**?

- **Thankfully, our text tells us in the title that** David wrote it**.**

- It **also provides us with additional information: it tells us the circumstances in David's life around the time the Psalm was written!**

- **Let's look again at the title.** (**READ Title**) (In reading), **Abimelech was actually a title for Philistine kings. Pharaoh was the proper title of the Egyptian** leader, and many Roman emperors used Caesar.

- **That should be said because, in 1 Samuel 21, Achish was the name of the King.**

- **It is a strange account of this man of God, David,** in 1 Samuel 21.

- **He was on the run, fleeing from his great enemy, King Saul**.

- His **circumstances were desperate!** So much so, **he left his own land** and went to the **land of the Philistines** (his other enemies) **to seek refuge and asylum from the Achish, the King** of Gath.

- You may **recall that the Giant Goliath**, whom David killed, **was also from Gath**.

- You may also recall that **before leaving for Gath** 1 Samael 21, **Ahimelech, the priest, gave David the sword of Goliath and some of the consecrated bread meant for the priests only.**

- So, **our author is clearing** David **(who is called the sweet Psalmist of Israel elsewhere**)!

- **And the circumstances he finds himself in are very dark and difficult days**!

- **Days in which David feared for his life**! **Days in which he had to hide in caves and other places of safety**!

- **Yet, despite these difficulties, we have this great statement of determination! To PRAISE the LORD**! "**I WILL BLESS the LORD at all times; his praise shall continually be in my mouth**."

- Often in David's Psalms! **He shows great determination** and **a great resolve** that clearly comes across. **Earlier, I read the beginning verses of David's words in Psalm 145**.

- **Listen to the "I will here, too!** "**I will extol you, my God and King, and bless your name forever and ever. Every day, I will bless you and praise your name forever and ever**.

- **We hear that same determination as Psalm 34**!

- **Despite the circumstances**, David it **anxious to convey deep gratitude and praise** that God spared his life! And he is anxious to share that with us!

- **So, I want to ask all of us a question: If we** are **in Christ this morning**, **do we know something about this resolve and practice? Are we growing daily in this grace of praising and thanking God**?

- Like David in verse 1, "**at all times,**" he says "**Continually**"!

- **Is this true of us**? Perhaps in some ways, it is similar to the exhortation the Apostle gives in 1 Thessalonians 5:18: "**Give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus**."

- **Make NO mistake**! **We have our dark and difficult days also**. **Don't we**?

- It could be right now for you! Perhaps your health is failing and is cause for great concern.

- Or could it be a loved one's health and who is suffering greatly?

- Perhaps a child is seriously ill? Or maybe the constant concern, even worry about an elderly parent?

- It could be a son or daughter who has not come to a saving knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ! **And your heart is terribly heavy because of that** this morning!

- **You see, dear brother or sister, this invitation is to bless and praise your God ALL TIMES! Oh, may God enable us to do so!**

- So the **WHO the invite is from is DAVID, which is really from the Holy Spirit**.

- Our text also tells us **who the invite is for**! In verse 2 "**My soul makes its boast in the Lord let the humble hear and be glad**." **Ah, it is for the humble!**

- **Who are the humble in Scripture**? It is the **same person the LORD blesses in Psalm 149:** "**For the LORD takes pleasure in his people; he adorns the humble with salvation**."

- In Psalm 25, we read, "**He leads the humble in what is right, and teaches the humble his way**."

- The **Hebrew word for humble refers to those down or bent over**. **He refers to the meek or afflicted, the lowly, the needy**, and **those who don't hold high opinions of themselves but realize the ugliness of their sinful hearts**!

- In essence, these are **the people Jesus mentions in the Sermon on the Mount and the Beatitudes** in Matthew 5.

- The **poor in spirit, those who mourn because of sin, those who are meek, those who seek righteousness, those who are merciful and pure in heart, the peacemakers and the persecuted**.

- They are the **humble who hear the praises of another person and rejoice! Who wants to join in**! **Who wants to encourage more of it**.

- **On this phrase, the famous Baptist preacher Charles Spurgeon** wrote, "**The confidant expression of tried believers is a rich comfort to their brethren of less experience. We ought to talk of the Lord's goodness on purpose that others may be confirmed in their trust in a faithful God.**"

- **You who have been Christians for many decades, and there are many here in that category, be aware that the newer believer in Christ should benefit from your example! They should benefit from hearing your prayers and praises to Christ!**

- **Let us seek to encourage them in their practice of praising God!**

- **The humble are not judgmental; they are NOT critical, but as David says, they are GLAD**!

- **Does that definition of HUMBLE describe you this morning? Does that describe our church body**?

- **So we've seen who it is from (David) and WHO the invitation is for**! (The **HUMBLE**!)

- The **WHEN in the invitation is NOW! David says, "at all times," "continually"**!

- **Whatever our circumstances! In times of joy, yes, but also in times of darkness**!

- It **must have been very dark for David**! Far from home, fearful for his life, faking insanity in the way that he did!

- I **will add we also have a where** on the **invitation**!

- Look at verse 3. "**Oh, magnify the LORD with me, and let us exalt his name together.**"

- **David is determined to praise God in the company of others**—we might call this corporate praise. "Let **us** exalt his name **together**."

- He wants to **exalt the Lord's greatness in public worship**! Which, of course, is the very reason we are here this morning! **Our God, our Savior the Lord Jesus Christ, is worthy of private and public worship!**

- **This is the activity taking place in heaven right now!** The Bible gives us little snippets of what happens there. **We get just a glimpse, but when we do, we see worship and praise**.

- In **Revelation 4, God opens heaven, and we see the worship of the Father**. " **Worthy are you our lord and God to receive glory and honor and power for you created all things and by your will they existed and were created.**"

- In **Revelation 5, we see the worship of the Son**! "**Worthy is the Lamb who was slain to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessings**!"

- Of course, the well-known passage in Isaiah 6 States, "Holy, Holy, **Holy is the Lord of Hosts; the whole earth is full of His glory**."

- Ever since **God lifted me out of the pit of sin as a young man in 1974, I have read A.W. Tozer's writings**.

- The **great Christian writer and preacher from the 20th century**.

- Tozer has a book entitled "**Worship the Missing Jewel of the Evangelical Church."** (which I highly commend). **The title itself speaks volumes**!

- He wrote these words: "**Why did Christ come? Why was He conceived? Why was He born? Why was He crucified? Why did He rise again? Why is he now at the right hand of the Father?** "**The answer to all these questions is, "So that He might make worshippers out of rebels**; **so that He might restore us again to the place of worship we knew when we were first created**."

- **If we believe in Christ and gladly claim Him as the only way to forgive sin, we have been saved so that we might worship and praise God**!

- The Psalmist said in Psalm 45, "A noble theme stirs my heart **as I recite my verses for the king; my tongue is like the pen of a skillful writer**."

- Oh, **may our tongues <u>be like the pen of a skillful writer</u>**!

- As **Charles Wesley wrote**, we sing at the close of our service, "**Oh for a <u>thousand tongues</u> to sing my great Redeemer's praise.**"

- **Dear brothers and sisters in Christ, let us, by God's grace, make it <u>our happy duty</u> to grow in this great privilege of worshiping God**.

- **As far as we physically and mentally can**, **let us magnify (to grow to make great) the Lord together as a church**!

- In **doing so, who knows what our gracious God might do to help us through any dark and difficult trials we face**!

David's Testimony

- So, we briefly have seen David's invitation to PRAISE.

- **Who sent** it (**God through David**), and **who intended it** (the **humble**)? **When is** it **for?** Worship **at all times in dark days and good**, and **where we should corporately praise our God!**

- Now, there is **a shift starting at verse 4**. **David provides us with his testimony**!

- Let's **re-read Verses 4 – 7** considering **the events that had happened in the author's life.**

- I have **no interest in commenting on David's actions regarding faking insanity**!
- **David's testimony, however, is that in spite of the dark events surrounding him,** in verse 4, **he "sought the Lord,**" in verse 5, **He "looked to him,**" and in verse 6, **He "cried**" **out to the Lord**.

- **All sinful mankind must seek after God no matter who we are**! **Even the great King of Israel had to** seek after God earnestly!

- **His announcement is that God <u>was pleased to hear</u> his earnest and sincere prayer**.

- **Verse 4:** "I sought the Lord, **<u>and he answered me</u>**." **Verse 6:** the **Lord <u>heard</u> him, and** "**<u>saved him out of all his troubles</u>**."

- Spurgeon, in his Treasury of David, wrote tha**t by faking insanity, David acted with "dubious morality**." You can decide.

- But Spurgeon also points out that even if David sinned by pretending to be someone else, **he s<u>till had license to</u>** <u>pray to the Lord</u>.

- He still had access to God.

- **Spurgeon writes,** "We may seek God even when we have sinned. If sin could blockade the mercy seat, it would be all over with us, but mercy is that there are gifts even for the rebellious and an advocate for men who sin."

- That should be a great encouragement to all struggling against sin!

- David's **testimony, his experience, is that even in the most difficult circumstances, he sought the Lord and had ready access to the Lord, who was pleased to deliver him!**

- **In the language of verse 4, "<u>from all my fears</u>."**

- David must have been terrified in the circumstances that he was in going to Gath!

- **He was <u>not like the confident young David</u> who ran toward the giant with a slingshot in hand, ready to fire**!

- **He was fearful, <u>YET IN HIS FEARS HE SOUGHT THE LORD</u>**!

- AND **GOD graciously removed his fears** from him.

- **Are you dealing with very difficult fears in your life this morning**? **Many of us are**!

- It no doubt is **quite different from David's,** but **none**the**less, there are very deep fears in your life**!

- Perhaps your **health?** Perhaps the fear of **death**?

- Perhaps the fear of **growing old and not being able to care for yourself** anymore.

- Or perhaps a **parent growing old** and unable to care for themselves?

- Perhaps you **fear the health of your child**, or maybe your **financial situation**!

- Or maybe you are **like Bunyan's Mr. Fearing, who doubted he was worthy to claim the promises of God**!

- F**or several reasons, I've been rereading sections of Pilgrim's Progress** that I haven't read for quite some time.

- Those of you familiar with the book, and I know many are, remember the character Mr. Fearing? He was a v**ery timid man traveling to the celestial city**. He came to the **mercy gate, afraid to knock** on it. **He was always full of fear and doubts that he would never get in.**

- E**very time he reached the gate**, **it opened, and Mr. Fearing** trembled, **ultimately stepping aside so others could enter**.

- Bunyan **writes that finally, Mr. Fearing took the hammer hanging on the gate** and **gave it a <u>small</u> rap or two**!

- You have to **love Bunyan's description of Mr. Fearing entering at the gate**.

- "*Then one opened to him, but he shrank back as before. He that opened stepped out after him and said, Thou trembling one, what do you want? With that, he fell down to the ground. He that spoke to him wondered to see him so faint. So he said to him,* ***Peace be to thee; up,*** *for I have set open the door to thee. Come in, for you are blessed. With that, he got up and went in trembling, and when he was in, he was ashamed to show his face*."

- You see, Fear comes to all of us in many different ways! There are many Mr. Fearing's in the church.

- But our text has good news for us this morning! God receives those who are fearful! This is what David found in Psalm 34. He was delivered. He was saved from his troubles.

- In **verse 5**, **David also testifies that all who look to God are radiant**—perhaps a better translation is "beaming." I think we all know what this means!

- You've been away, perhaps on a **long business trip**—away from home for several days! When you return, you arrive at the airport late in the evening. You are tired and really want to get home.

- **As you walk out of the airport, you see a crowd of people and a line of cars picking up passengers. Then you spot your dear wife, who has been waiting with the car to pick you up**.

- What happens? Your face beams! Radiant, you lighten up! You are glad to see the one you love!

- Or think of the **Soldier who has been away for months and arrives home**. **At the airport, he** or she **sees his or her beloved family, who have been waiting. Both** the family's **and the soldier's faces beam! They are radiant**.

- **That is, in some small sense, the gist of David's words in verse 5**. Those who look to God are glad! Radiant faces! They will NEVER be ashamed!

- David's **testimony also tells us that God hears the humble man who cries out to him.**

- **Notice what <u>David called himself</u> in verse 6: "This poor man!"**

- David **was a poor, humble, and downcast man when he faked his insanity**.

- **<u>He didn't even have food to eat</u>, so Ahimelech, the priest in Nob, gave him the consecrated bread, which was intended for the priests only**.

- **David was also poor because he had NO WAY to rescue himself while in Gath.** Yet God, in His mercy, allowed him to escape.

- In fact, Scripture tells us in the next chapter of 1 Samuel, chapter 22, **that after David faked insanity and King Achish let him go, he left Gath and escaped to the cave of Adullam**.

- At **this cave his brothers and all his father's house came to meet him**.

1 Samuel 22:1, 2 **David left Gath and escaped to the cave of Adullam. When his brothers and his father's household heard about it, they went down to him there. 2 Those who were in distress, debt, or discontented gathered around him, and he became their commander. About four hundred men were with him**."

- **When I read that passage, I can't help but think of our Savior!**

- In Mark chapter 2, Scripture says Jesus reclined at a table in his house, and Mark tells us **many tax collectors and sinners came to be with him**!

- **Let us praise God this morning that Jesus is a friend of sinners**! **He is a friend to all who look to HIM and have no doubt that they are poor because of their sinful hearts!**

- **This is David's testimony** in Psalm 34: "**This poor man cried," and the Lord, in abounding grace and mercy, listened.**

- **Does that describe your testimony this morning**? **Are you poor in Spirit this morning**?

- **Do you know of your deep need for Christ**? **Sometimes, God has to take some to the very point of desperation before they will finally cry out to him**!

David's Encouragement

- **Lastly, verses 8 – 10, David's strong encouragement**.

- **READ verses 8 – 10**

- **Verses 8 – 10 are in response to the blessings David just testified to.**

- In **other words, something good has happened to him and he wants to share it with others**!

- The **Psalmist wants others to see the benefits and blessings from the Lord's dealings with him**!

- That is the **primary emphasis of verses 8 through 10**.

- **God blesses you with something wonderful and what do you want to do**? Pick up the **phone to call someone, send a text, and send an** email whatever you need to do so that others know! You want to share your joy!

- **So David wants us to know**. **He wants to share his joy in God's work for him and instruct us on the great value of knowing God.**

- So figuratively, he uses two of the senses! Taste and Sight. **He says, "Taste and See."**

- In other words, **Taste and See for yourself what God is like**!

- **Knowing God should be experiential!** Earlier, he said let the "**HUMBLE HEAR and BE GLAD,"** but now he wants us to do more than hear! **He wants us to TASTE AND SEE**!

- **Man does not just sample God!** This **is NOT like when you are at the grocery store** and, as you walk **around, you see that there are samples of food at various places!** Perhaps something is on sale, and the store has samples, hoping you will buy it!

- So, you **take a taste here and a taste sampling the food**!

- **That is NOT what David is saying**! This is more like Thanksgiving Dinner! You fully indulge. **You experience what it means to Know Christ**!

- In doing so **you find a refuge**! **You find a place of safety for your soul**! You find that **there is peace with God through the Lord Jesus Christ**.

- You **find what the Psalmist said in Psalm 46:** "**God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble**."

- **You also find the Goodness of God! "Taste and See what? That the Lord is GOOD!"**

- **Over and over again, Scripture is abundant in declaring the goodness of God! Every Christian, without exception, should be able to testify to it**!

- Psalm 52:1 tells us, "**The goodness of God endures continually**.
- Nahum 1:7: "**The LORD is good, a stronghold in the day of trouble he knows those who take refuge in him**."

- **In his book "The Practice of Godliness,"** Jerry Bridges **wrote, "Kindness is a sincere desire for the happiness of others**; **goodness is the activity calculated to advance that happiness**."

- **Goodness shows itself through activity. If you want to know God's goodness, look to the life and ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ**!

- If indeed being **good is** an **"activity calculated to advance happiness**," look at the Savior of sinners**. He is ALL GOOD**!

- He is (as the writer of Hebrews tells us) "**the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature"**. In chapter 1 of Colossians, the Apostle says, "**He (that is Christ) is the image of the invisible God**."

- We **only need to look to Christ to see the goodness of God**.

- Jesus said to Philip in John 14. "**He that has seen me has seen the Father**."

- Perhaps **you are NOT yet a Christian, and you are wondering what God is like and what will happen if you come to Him**.

- You **don't need to guess or doubt**!

- **Look to Christ**! **He is the eternal God!**

- **He is ALL good, so much so the son of God came into this world, fully man yet fully God, and freely laid down His life for sinners.**

- In the language of the letter to the church in Rome. "**For while we were still weak, at the right time, Christ died for the ungodly. God shows his love** for **us in that** Christ died for us **while we were still sinners**. **Now, that is goodness**!

- **Do you know that goodness this morning**?

- **We learn from Christ's life while he lived on this earth how God acts toward people**. **Those who are hypocritical and phony will find God the same way Jesus dealt with hypocrites—full of rebuke and warning!**

- **But those who recognize their need**! **Those who earnestly cry "THIS POOR MAN" will find goodness and mercy following them all the days of their lives!**

- David writes elsewhere, "**Good and upright is the Lord; therefore, he instructs sinners in the way**." Ps 25:8
- **You need never doubt that Christ is good or if He will receive you! He invites all to come.**

- We love to sing, "**Come ye sinners, poor and needy, Weak and wounded, sick and sore, Jesus ready stands to save you full of pity, love, and power**!

- This is how we "**taste and see"** the **LORD IS GOOD**. We run to Christ for HIS MERCY.

- So we have **strong encouragement from David regarding the goodness of GOD!**

- Then, in verse 9, **We are encouraged to fear the LORD**!

- That is, of course, living each day with **holy reverence, respect, and awe that is due to the Creator** from his creation!

- **How often** does **Scripture urge us to FEAR GOD**?

- Psalm 31:19: "**How great are your goodness, which you have stored up for those who fear you**."

- **We sang** Psalm 130 this morning**, linking a believer's forgiveness** of sin to the **fear of God**.

- "**If you, O Lord, should mark iniquities, O LORD, who could stand? But with you, there is forgiveness that you may be feared**."

- How often **God promises in His Word blessings upon the man or woman, boy or girl, who walks in the fear of the LORD**!

- **I am a lover of most of what C.S Lewis wrote! One of my all-time favorite pieces of literature is the Chronicles of Narnia.** I think Lewis gives us a great illustration of **the goodness of God combined with the importance of the fear of God**!

- In The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe, Lewis reminds us of the nature of God and how we relate to him. There is a conversation between Susan (one of the 4 children in the story) and Mr. Beaver. You may remember the encounter. Mr. Beaver says, "Aslan (who, if you don't know, is the great Christ figure in the Chronicles) is a lion- the Lion, the great Lion." "Oh," says Susan, "I'd thought he was a man. Is he quite safe? I shall feel rather nervous about meeting a lion." "Safe?" says Mr. Beaver. "Who said anything about safety? 'Of course, **he isn't safe. But he's good. He's the King, I tell you**.

- **God is infinitely good and infinitely holy. We should always approach Him with godly reverence**.

- We **must not forget that in Psalm 89, He is great and greatly to be feared**.

- In Proverbs 14 **the fear of the LORD is a fountain of life, that one may avoid the snares of death.**"

- The **fear of God is <u>like the reins</u> placed on a horse. It restrains, it pulls us back from sin! But at the same time it is <u>like a whip</u> in a jockey's hand, encouraging onward to know God!**

- David **urges the "saints," <u>which in Hebrew</u>** means **<u>the "Holy ones."</u>**

- Those who are part of God's holy nation and under His covenant. Those who reverence and fear the LORD. It is to those who fear God who will have their needs satisfied. They will lack no good thing!

- Then David's final word of encouragement is this! "**The young lions suffer want and hunger, but those who seek the LORD lack no good thing**."

- **Here and elsewhere in Scripture, the young lions are a metaphor for the strong in this world**. Those who, on the surface, don't seem to have too many problems.

- Like the wicked in Psalm 73, they have no pangs until death, and their bodies are fat and sleek. Worldly people are envious of them because they seem to have all the so-called good things in life: Health, Wealth, Beauty, etc.

- But **David says even these unconcerned people, like young lions, will suffer want and hunger**! **It is only those who seek God, who know the eternal needs of their soul**s, **who have all that is necessary in Christ**.

- So we close on that note of encouragement from David. **You can be strong. Healthy, financially well off, attractive, have a nice house and car, etc., but still suffer want and hunger if you don't know** the Lord Jesus Christ **in an experiential way**.

- **If you fall into that category, you are in a dangerous position**! If you have not tasted and seen that the Lord is good, I urge you to wake up today! **Jesus stands ready to save**!

- **Call upon Christ today**. Repent of sin (that is, turn away from it) and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ.

- And you, my dear brother and sister in Christ. Let us accept **David's invitation, learn from his testimony, and receive his encouragement to give PRAISE to our beloved and precious Lord and Savior**!

- **And in HIM alone, let our souls boost the LORD**. **LET US PRAY**